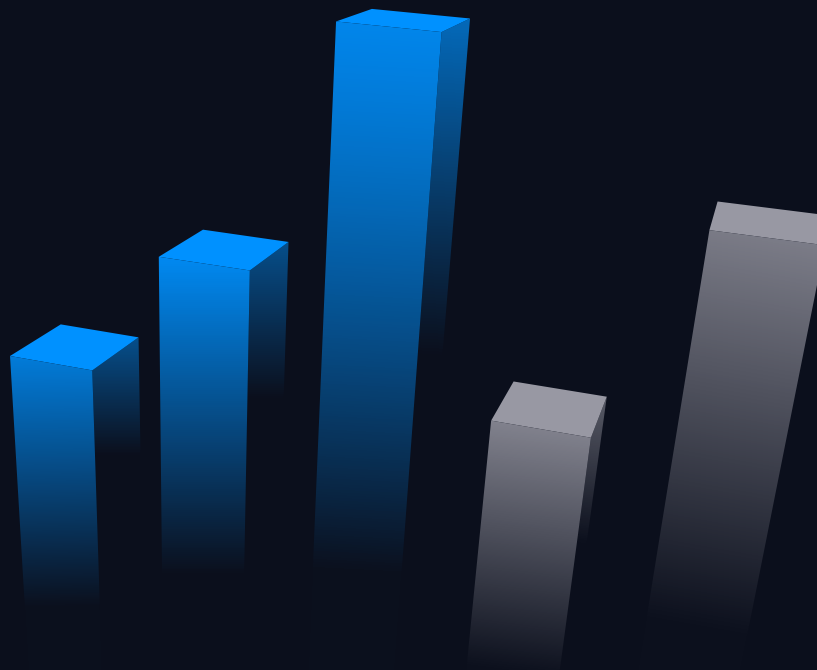




The Robocall Report

2021 MID-YEAR PHONE SCAM REPORT



THE STATE OF THE ROBOCALL

SPAM
CALLS

40,100,000,000

Total Spam Calls Year to Date 2021

71,500,000,000

Projected Total Spam Calls in 2021

30%

Projected Annual Increase of Spam Calls

\$325,000,000

Reported Financial Losses to Robocalls, Year to Date 2021

\$615,000,000

Projected Financial Losses to Robocalls in 2021

40%

Projected Annual Increase of Losses

\$1,200

Reported Financial Losses Per Robocall Scam, [According to the FTC](#)

FINANCIAL
LOSS

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE PHONE CALLS

Over the last 12 months, robocallers' message to American smartphone owners has been clear: don't count us out. [After the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted phone scam operations worldwide in 2020](#), scammers were eager to get back to the phones as soon as possible—and the numbers prove it.

From [June 2020 through December 2020](#), RoboKiller discovered that spam calls grew at a rate of 30% per month; they reached their peak of 6.2 billion total robocalls in October. The rapid increase in spam calls in the back half of 2020 represented an aggressive push by scammers to make up for lost ground following a more than 40% decrease in average monthly robocalls from January 2020 through May 2020.

The astronomical robocall growth rates observed from mid- to late-2020 didn't continue into 2021. Spam call volume grew a pedestrian 5% per month in the first half of the year, and April and May even showed month-over-month declines. Still, Americans are on track to receive 30% more spam calls in 2021 than they did a year prior.

Recent slowdowns in robocall volume were likely driven by the [FCC's June 30th STIR/SHAKEN implementation deadline](#), as scammers prepared for a more challenging technological landscape. [As RoboKiller reported](#), the new anti-spoofing caller ID authentication framework represents a step in the right direction as it relates to curbing the spam call epidemic. However, it leaves a number of gaps that we expect scammers will exploit.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ROBOCALLS

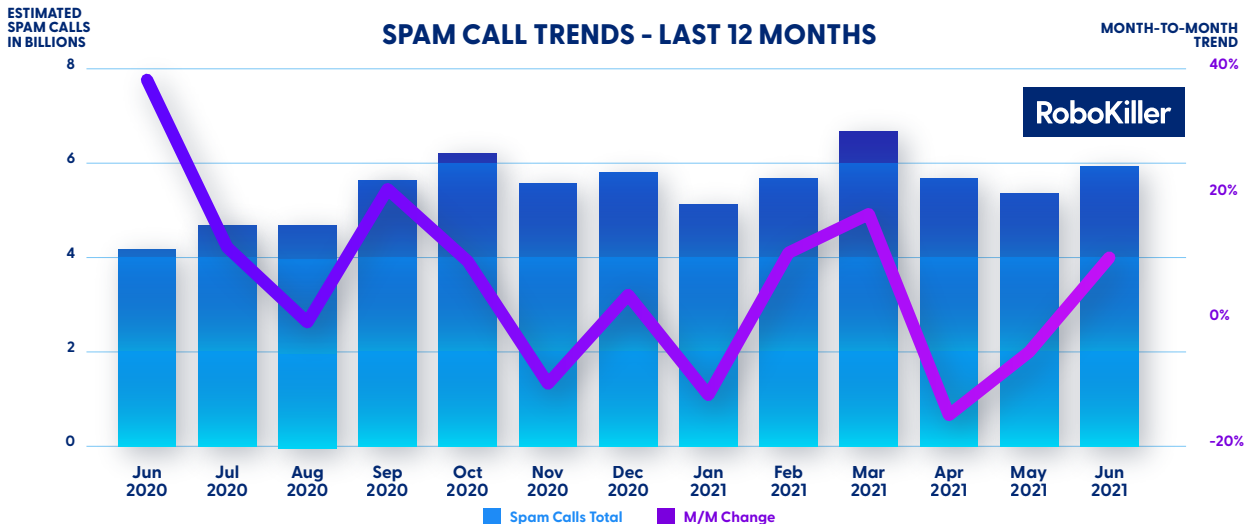
Unfortunately for many innocent targets, scammers' increased efforts in the last 12 months have paid off financially. In Q3 2020, U.S. consumers reported \$130 million in financial losses to phone scams to the FTC, a 46% increase from Q2 2020's \$89 million. These reported losses have remained elevated since—victims lost approximately \$50 million in reported financial losses to robocall scams **per month** (\$145 million) in Q1, according to the [FTC's most recent reports](#). (It's important to note that these numbers only reflect losses reported to the FTC, and therefore do not cover the full extent of consumer losses faced.)

Based on 2021 year to date trends, we project that 2021 will see approximately 71.5 billion total robocalls placed to U.S. consumers, resulting in more than \$615 million in reported financial losses to scams—a 40% increase from 2020. The immediate impact we expect STIR/SHAKEN to have on reducing spoofed robocalls in July and August could offer some reprieve, but it's likely that robocalls and reported financial losses will rebound in late 2021 as scammers find ways around new anti-caller ID spoofing technology.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING ON THE FRONT LINES

Record-Breaking Rebounds Post-Pandemic

In July 2020, scammers assembled quickly to make up for lost ground after COVID-19 impacted phone scam operations worldwide. [In April 2020, the U.S. observed record lows of spam calls](#)—less than 2 billion total—but that figure soared to 6.1 billion monthly spam calls by October 2020, marking a 200% increase in just 6 months' time.

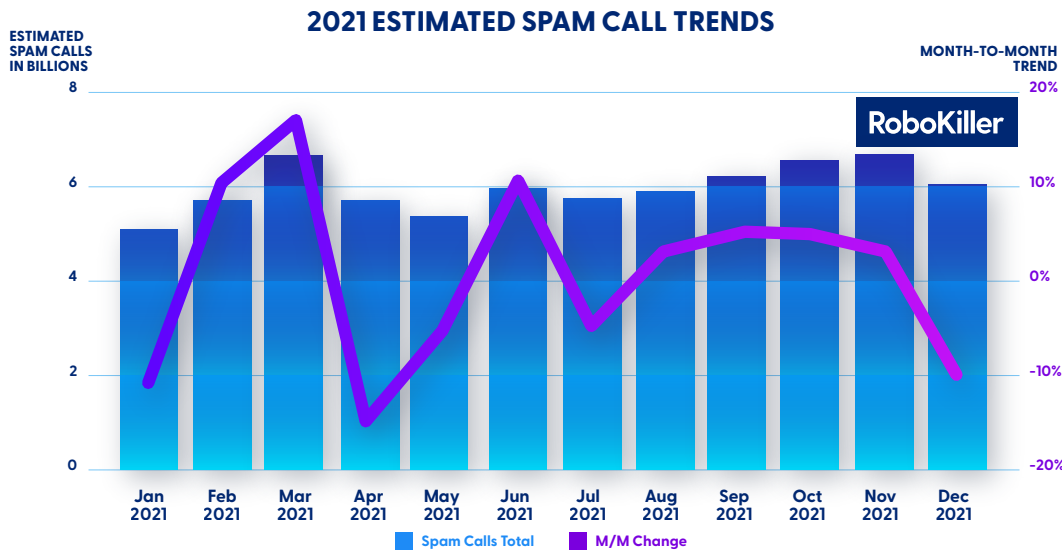


Late 2020 Trends Bleed Into Early 2021

Scammers' concerted efforts to take advantage of unsuspecting Americans continued into early 2021. [From January to March 2021](#), total monthly robocalls remained at around 5 billion per month, on average—27% higher than the same time period in 2020.

[April and May 2021](#) reflected the first significant slowdown in robocalls in the trailing 6 months, as they decreased by an average of 5% per month. This decrease is believed to be driven by some larger carriers' early release of their STIR/SHAKEN solutions, as well as global resurgences of COVID-19 cases. In addition, in some cases, reinstatement of lockdown orders may have impacted international spam call volume.

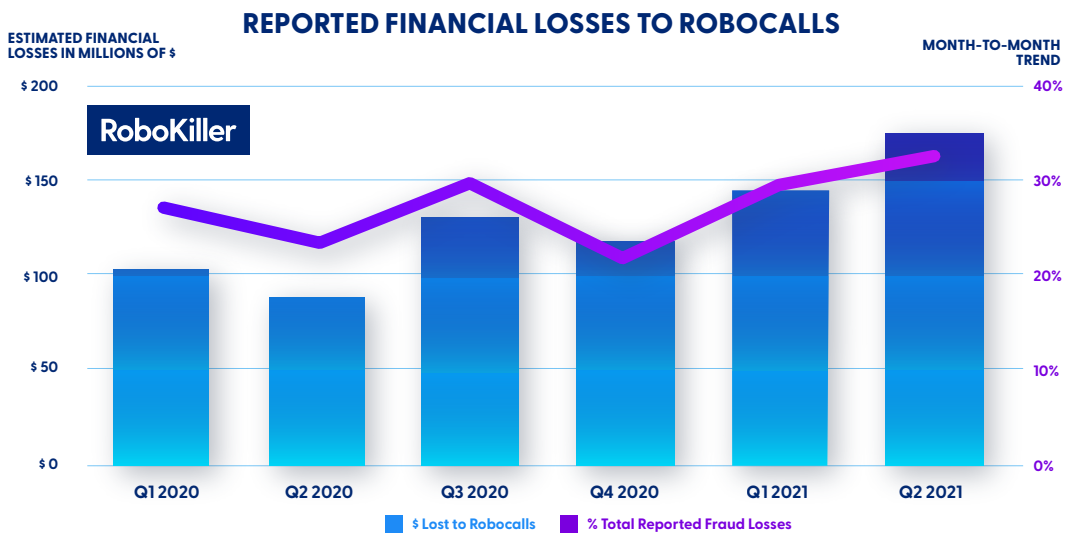
[June's 11% rebound in total robocalls](#) is in line with our [prediction](#) that scammers would make a final push to maximize their robocall returns ahead of STIR/SHAKEN's June 30th deadline. We expect the official release of STIR/SHAKEN to drive an average robocall decrease of 5% per month from July to August 2021. However, we believe this will be a temporary trend, as scammers pivot to find new ways around the FCC's protocol. RoboKiller predicts that these trends will result in 71.5 billion total spam calls reaching American smartphones by the end of December 2021.



Fewer Robocalls Still Led to Greater Financial Losses in 2020

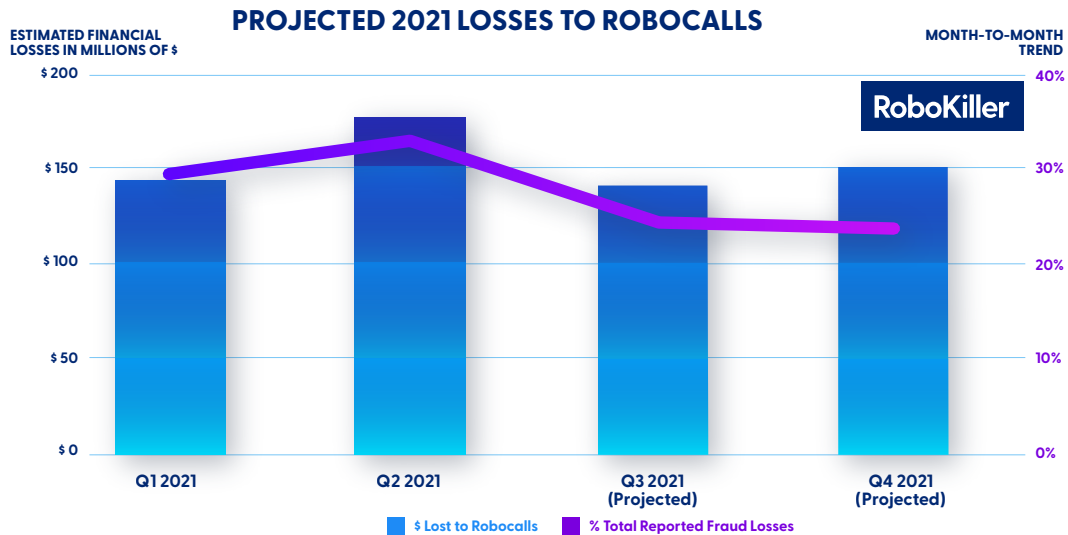
Despite 2020's 10% decrease in total spam calls, [Americans still reported a 5% increase](#) in financial losses to robocalls compared to 2019's \$427M.

[In 2020](#), RoboKiller observed scammers pivoting their phone scam strategy to tailor to relevant, believable COVID-19 and stimulus scams to maximize their earnings per victim. And it worked. In 2020, consumers reported an average financial loss to robocalls of \$1,200 per scam, a 20% increase from \$1,000 per scam in 2019.



Consumers Are On Track to Lose Even More This Year

Year to date 2021, Americans have [reported an estimated \\$325 million in financial losses to robocalls](#), representing more than 25% of the \$1 billion in total reported fraud losses across all contact methods. These early trends indicate that reported financial losses are on track to increase by 40% in 2021.

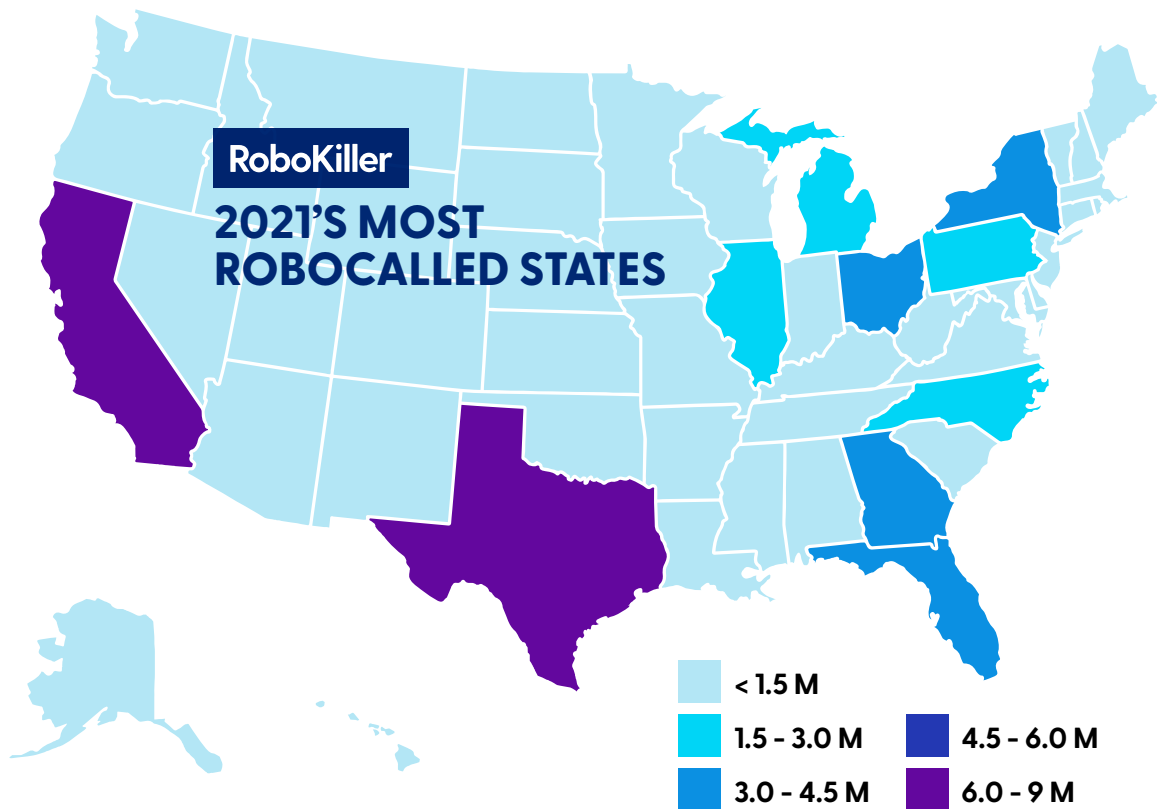


Reported losses per scam remain at 2020's \$1,200 per-scam level, indicating scammers continue to deploy more targeted scams to maximize how much money they can steal from victims. Scams that focus on the transition back to pre-pandemic life, such as vacation offers, student loan relief programs, and car warranty robocalls have been among the top scams [RoboKiller has observed thus far in 2021](#).

2021'S MOST ROBOCALLED STATES

Texas, Georgia, Ohio, and North Carolina are on track to see the [largest year-over-year total projected robocall increases](#) in 2021, an average spike of 40% since 2020.

Similar to trends observed in past years, robocallers continue to target densely populated cities and states. RoboKiller's data also indicates that scammers may target states and regions that have large elderly populous, which is why we often see large southern states in RoboKiller's top 10 most robocalled states.

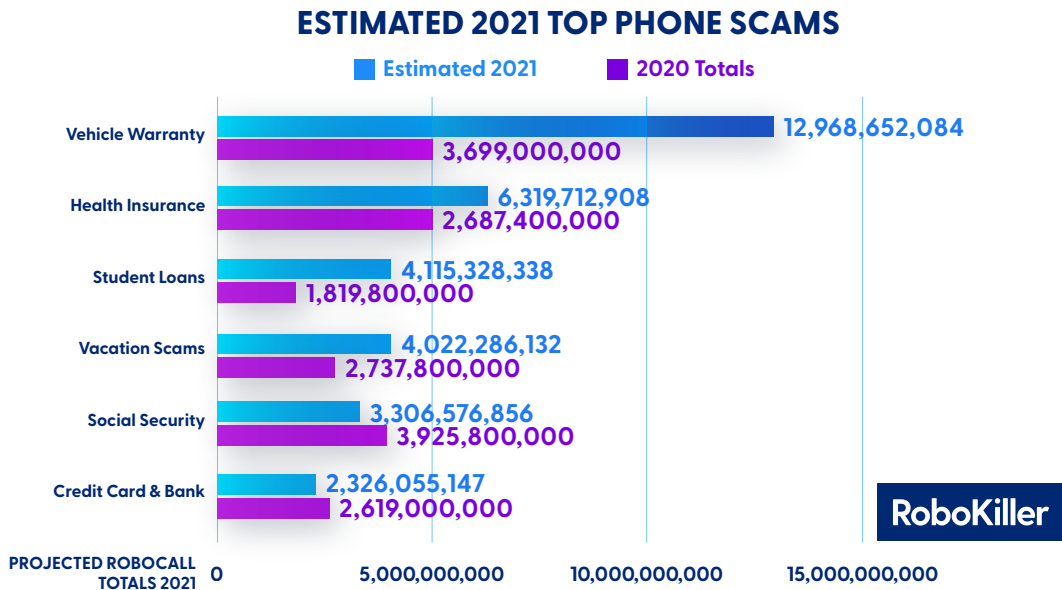


State	Projected Robocalls 2021	% Y/Y Change
Texas	9,086,405,011	43.73%
California	7,383,823,722	33.81%
Florida	5,207,731,033	37.31%
Ohio	3,288,343,157	42.34%
New York	3,235,120,522	36.79%
Georgia	3,080,229,982	42.03%
Pennsylvania	2,868,246,271	42.55%
North Carolina	2,746,140,993	41.10%
Illinois	2,610,599,644	35.94%
Michigan	2,062,490,275	34.54%

2021'S PHONE SCAM LEADERBOARD

Car Warranty Scams Will Take The Lead Uncontested

It's statistically possible that every smartphone owner in the United States will have received more than one car warranty scam by the end of 2021. Seen often on social media as the relatable phone scam everyone receives, the car warranty robocall is projected to become the biggest phone scam since RoboKiller began monitoring robocall trends in 2017. This robocall category is now twice the size of the next largest category and has leapfrogged 2020's leader, social security and IRS scams.



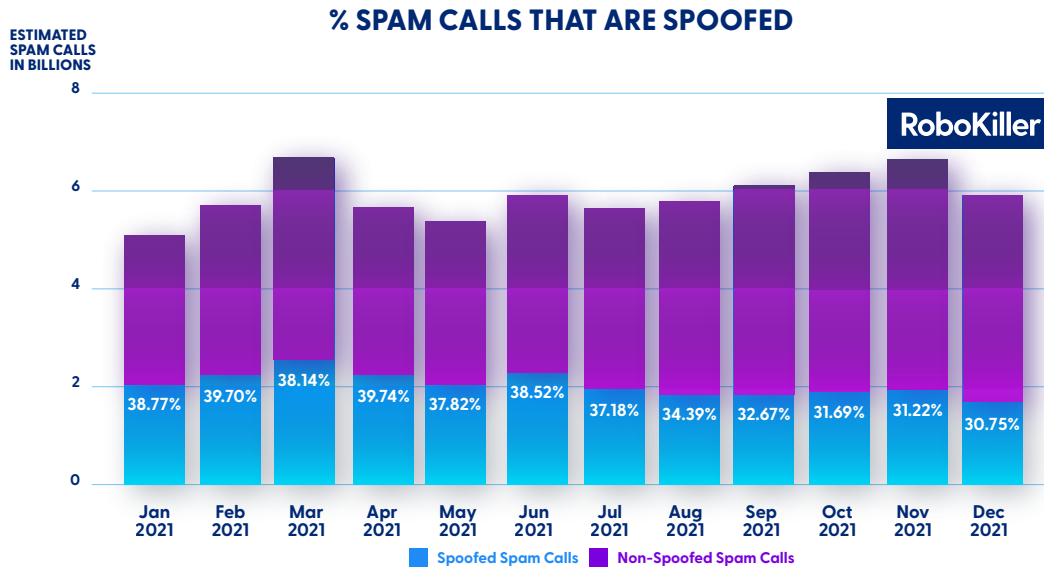
[▶ LISTEN TO A CAR WARRANTY ROBOCALL BLOCKED BY ROBOKILLER](#)

COMPARING ROBOCALL SCAMS CAN TELL US A LOT

Robocall scams can tell us a lot about current economic trends and our biggest insecurities because scammers tend to craft their scams to be as opportunistic as possible. [In 2020](#), we observed larger numbers of financial scams (bank + IRS) due to the contraction of the job market and economic impacts of COVID-19. In 2021, we're seeing phone scams more relevant to the resurgence of travel, COVID-19 programs such as student loan relief coming to an end, and vehicle warranty promotions, as more people prepare to return to their commutes or hold onto their current vehicle for longer than expected in the face of new car shortages.

THE (HOPEFULLY LIMITED) ROLE CALLER ID SPOOFING WILL PLAY IN 2021

With [STIR/SHAKEN's](#) efforts to prevent illegal caller ID spoofing well underway, better understanding the percentage of spam call traffic that employs spoofing tactics will be critical in measuring the program's effectiveness.



[RoboKiller](#) estimates that spam calls using spoofed caller IDs (meaning caller IDs that were not truly the origin phone number) represented approximately 37% of the total spam call traffic RoboKiller received and blocked year to date. Based on recent trends and the new STIR/SHAKEN technology, we expect this number to decrease to 30% by December 2021.

But, unfortunately, that won't mean Americans will receive less spam in 2021.

THE STATE OF THE SPAM TEXT

SPAM TEXTS

47,500,000,000

Total Spam Texts Year To Date 2021

86,000,000,000

Projected Total Spam Texts in 2021

55%

Projected Annual Increase of Spam Texts

\$45,500,000

Reported Financial Losses to Spam Texts, Year to Date 2021

\$101,000,000

Projected Financial Losses to Spam Texts in 2021

18%

Projected Annual Increase of Losses

\$800

Reported Financial Losses Per Scam Text, [According to the FTC](#)

FINANCIAL LOSS

THE STATE OF THE SPAM TEXT

THE ROBOCALL BLOCKING EFFORT'S BLIND SPOT

[Since the TRACED ACT was signed into law in 2019](#), STIR/SHAKEN and other widescale efforts to thwart the robocall problem in the United States have required a lot of attention from everyone involved. This intense (and welcomed) focus on the solution to robocalls has kept many preoccupied while scammers work not-so-silently in the background to find new ways to steal from consumers over the phone. [Reintroducing: the spam text.](#)

Spam texts are not new to cellphone users, but in 2020 the explosion of nearly 6 billion unwanted texts per month put them on the map as the newest spam threat to Americans. In August 2020, total spam texts surpassed total robocalls in the United States for the first time in history and have [remained above monthly robocall totals since](#). [While political texting in a presidential election year](#) (and the spam complaints RoboKiller received about them) played a significant role in unwanted texts reaching record-setting highs in 2020, continued average monthly spam text growth rates of approximately 5% in early 2021 indicate the problem is only going to get worse.

Based on these trends, [RoboKiller estimates that Americans will receive 86 billion total spam texts in 2021](#), a 55% increase from 2020. Combined with projected annual robocall volume, this means that Americans will likely receive more than 158 billion unwanted messages in 2021—as if 71.5 billion spam calls weren't bad enough. We expect this astonishing annual increase to be driven in part by STIR/SHAKEN's impact on caller ID spoofing: scammers will need to find new ways to steal from people over the phone, and texting provides them an alternative.

THE LIKELY OUTCOME

[2021's 86 billion projected total spam texts](#) is predicted to drive an estimated \$101 million in reported total losses to text scams, an 18% increase from 2020. [According to the FTC](#), reported financial losses to text scams are lower than robocalls at an estimated \$800 in financial losses per reported text scam. We expect these reported losses to increase in coming years as scammers adopt spam texting more widely and get smarter about their scams.

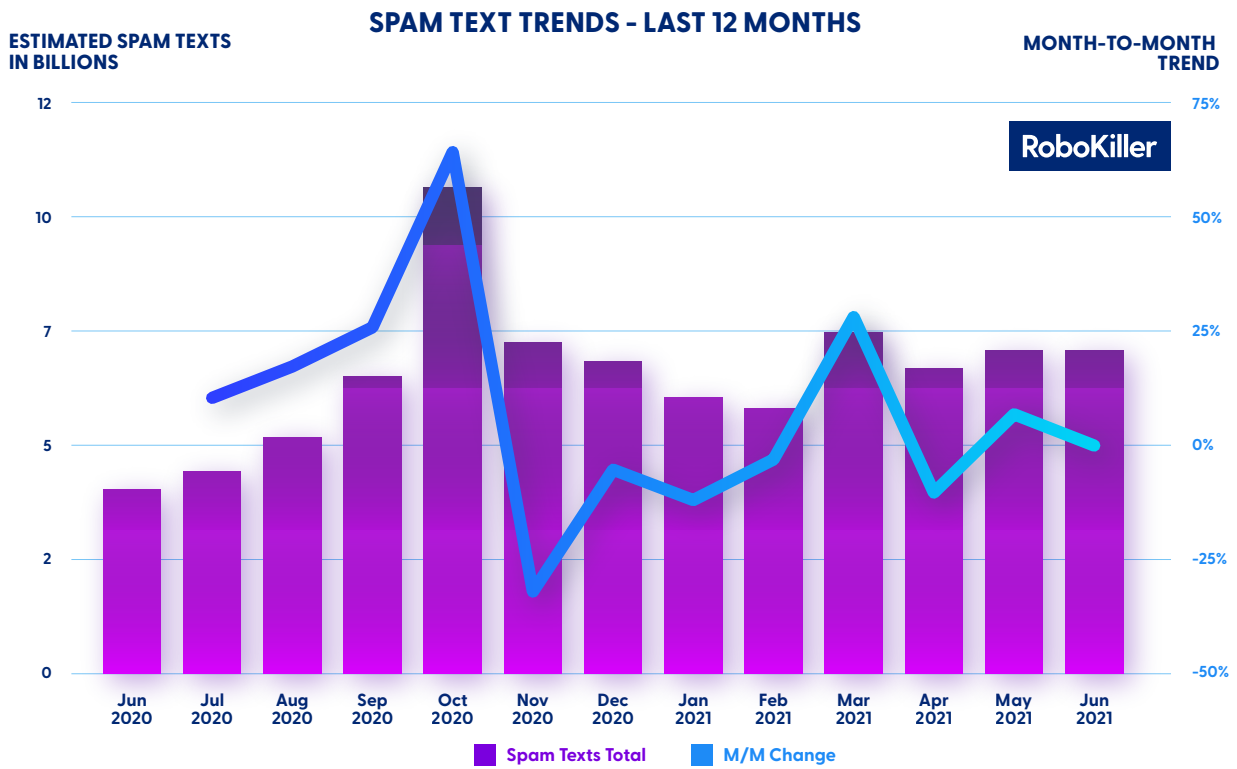
WHAT WE'RE SEEING ON THE FRONT LINES

2020's Fine Line Between Political Texts and Spam Texts

In the latter half of 2020, [RoboKiller observed a large spike in spam complaints about unwanted political messaging](#). We investigated the matter and found that Americans received more than [18.5 billion total political text messages in 2020](#) as a result of the past year's presidential campaign.

[READ MORE IN ROBOKILLER'S 2021 POLITICAL MESSAGE REPORT](#)

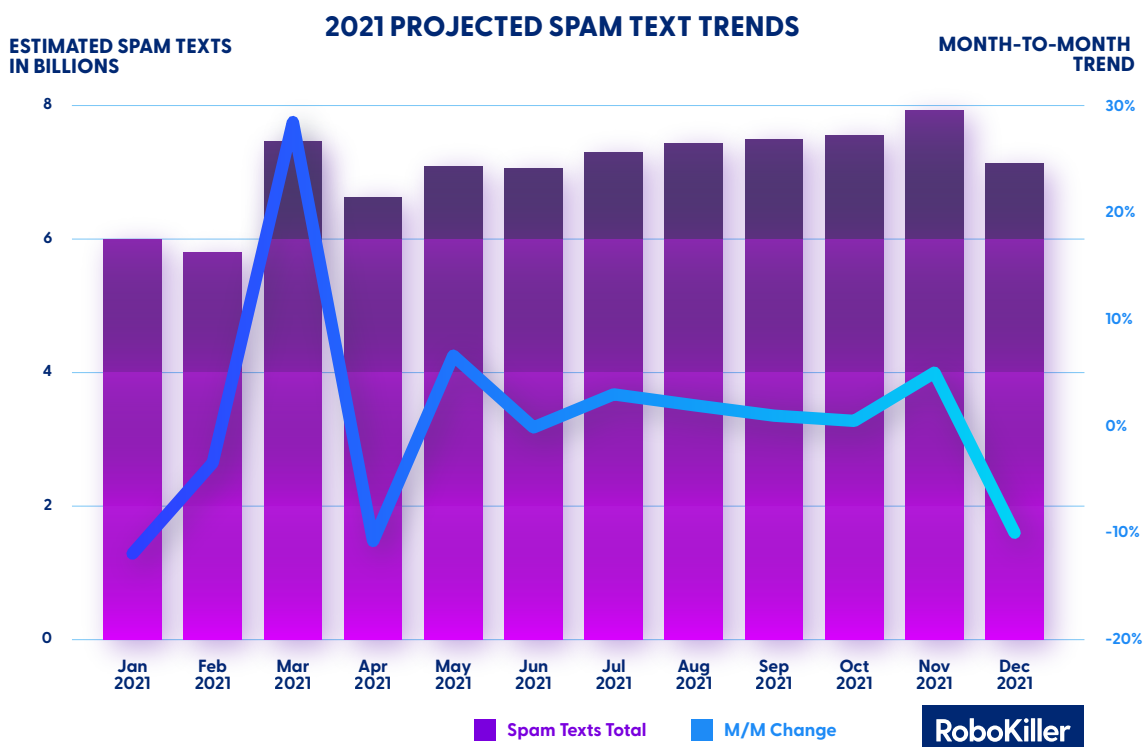
Combined, spam texts and unwanted political messages drove RoboKiller's estimates to an all-time high in October 2020 with unwanted text estimates reaching 10.5 billion that month.



Early 2021 Trends Reflect More Moderate Spam Text Growth Levels

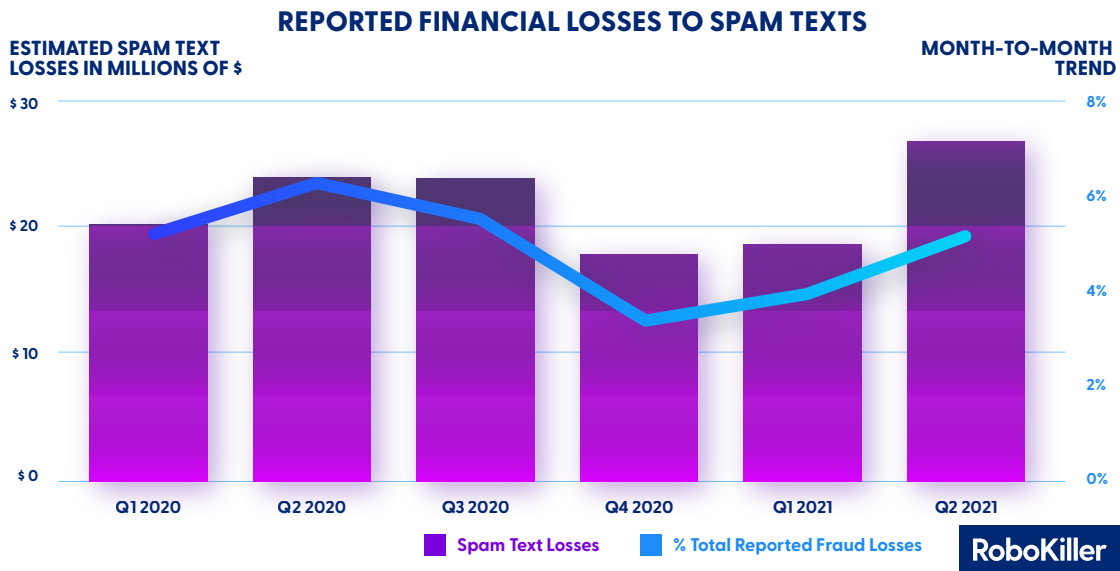
Though still not ideal, we believe the 5% average growth rate in total spam texts observed from [January to March 2021](#) reflects a more sustainable growth rate and one that smartphone users can expect to hold for the remainder of 2021.

Based on trends observed between [April and June 2021](#), we expect that STIR/SHAKEN will drive a roughly 5% average monthly increase in total spam texts for the remainder of 2021 as scammers pivot portions of their operations to new mediums. Expected decreases in spam texts around the 2021 holiday season, alongside the increase of online shopping and delivery services, also factored into our projected 55% annual increase in 2021.



More Messages Meant Greater Financial Losses

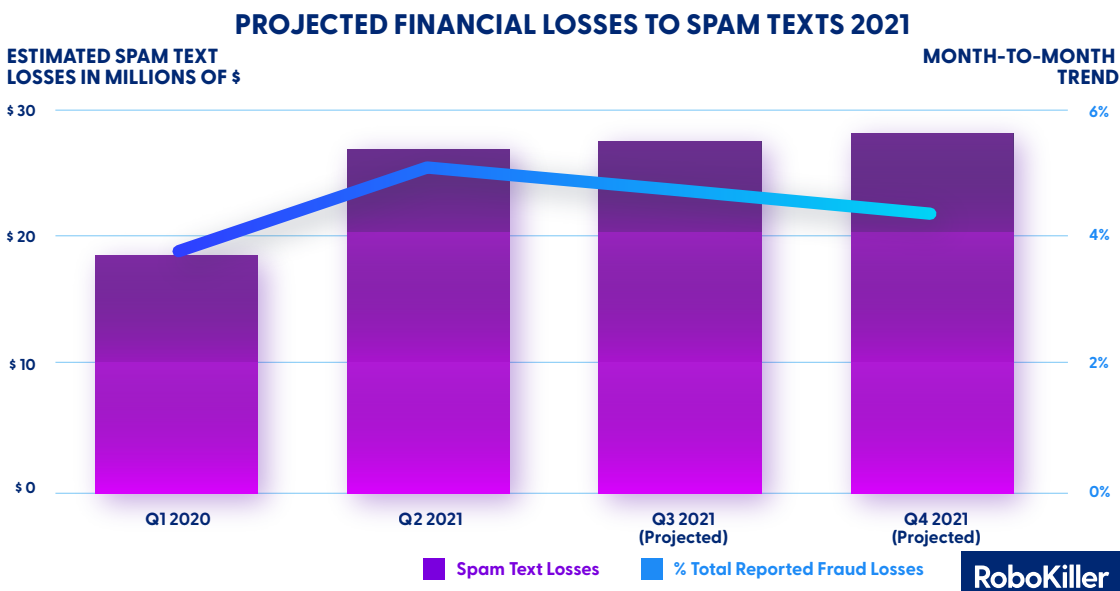
From 2019 to 2020, [Americans reported a 28% increase in total financial losses to spam texts](#)—\$86 million compared to 2019’s \$67 million. Unlike robocall trends in 2020, rapid increases in spam texts did drive increases in reported losses. Applying what we know about scammers, we expect this is a result of scammers continuing to refine their scam tactics to maximize their earnings per victim. In coming years, this will likely result in a significant increase in average losses per reported spam text.



2021 Will Be No Different

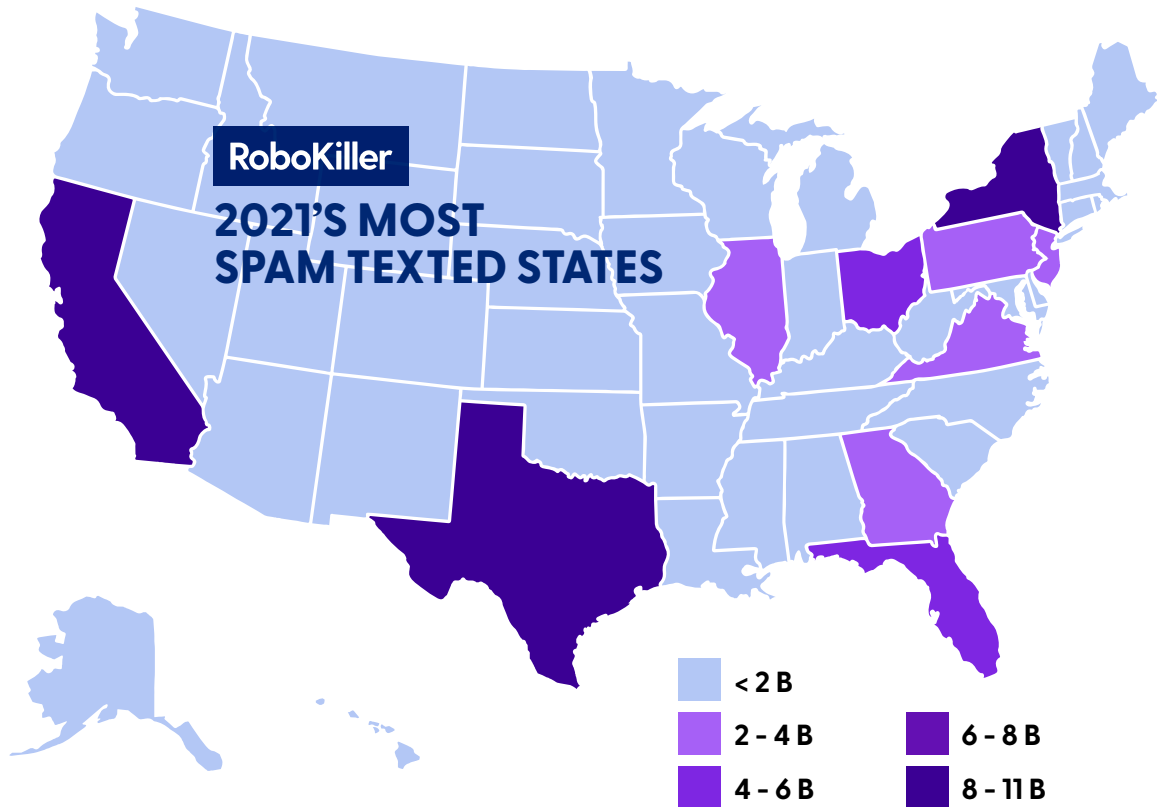
In 2021, we observed levels similar to late 2020 in reported financial losses to text scams—[approximately \\$6.5 million in reported financial losses per month from January through March](#).

We expect total reported financial losses to text scams to increase in 2021 as scammers refine their text scam tactics. We expect Q3 to bring increased reported losses as spam texts get savvier. However, we project a decrease towards the end of Q4 following an expected scale back in total spam texts in December. This trend is not uncommon for robocalls as well; we often see high levels of call volume in October and November before the holiday season, and lower levels leading up to and following the holidays as scammers and telemarketers take time off. RoboKiller predicts this will mean consumers will lose approximately \$101 million to text scams by the end of 2021—an 18% increase from 2020.



2021's MOST SPAM TEXTED STATES

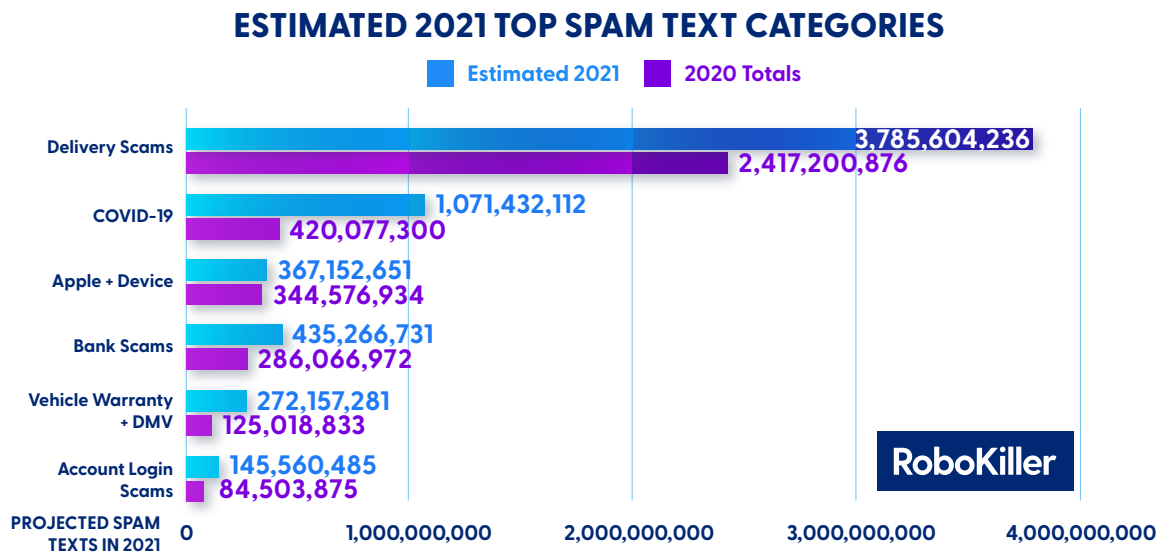
Texas, California, and Florida are on track to be the most spam texted states in America in 2021, [with their projected annual totals representing 25% of the anticipated 86 billion total spam texts in 2021](#). Our spam text trends indicate that text scammers follow a similar approach to robocallers: they focus on more densely populated cities and states to increase their likelihood of finding targets to steal from.



State	Projected Spam Texts 2021
Texas	10,945,454,202
California	9,273,824,805
Florida	4,926,567,787
Georgia	3,542,498,138
New York	9,951,402,672
Illinois	3,805,761,181
Virginia	2,845,419,329
Ohio	4,931,455,463
Pennsylvania	3,169,177,704
New Jersey	2,380,574,303

2021'S TEXT SCAM LEADERBOARD

In 2021 year to date, [spam text trends](#) indicate that scammers are continuing to employ targeted, relevant scam tactics to maximize their earnings. COVID-19 vaccination, contact tracing, and other related text scams are projected to increase by more than 100% in 2021 to 1 billion annual texts, up from an estimated 420 million in 2020. We expect these scam trends will mirror those of robocalls by continuing to result in increased reported financial losses.



As post-COVID-19 economic anxiety lingers into 2021, we're projecting a 50% average annual increase in bank verification and account login text scams. Scammers will also continue to employ successful 2020 tactics with delivery text scams (especially around the holiday season) to maximize their return on their phone scam investments.

WHAT DOES A COVID TEXT SCAM LOOK LIKE?

A few days left to submit your vaccine record & get entered to win \$\$! If you have not, upload a pic of your vaccination card by 8/16!

WHAT DOES AN AMAZON SCAM LOOK LIKE?

Your Amazon account will be disabled due to abnormal login. Click link to recover.

A WORD ON THE FUTURE OF SPAM TEXTS

After closely [monitoring spam text trends in 2019 and 2020](#), we believe that spam texts have the potential to become the next robocall problem (or even bigger) if we do not take measures to stop scammers before they can take advantage of the industry's blindspot. As everyday people continue to adopt new methods of communicating digitally, scammers will keep finding ways to evolve with new mediums and methods to steal from people. Luckily, RoboKiller has already released a spam text blocking solution that is 95% effective at protecting its users from dangerous and costly spam texts. RoboKiller also plans to continue developing technology designed to prevent the spam text problem from becoming more widespread. We encourage more stakeholders and regulators in the industry to join us in expanding their spam blocking focus and creating a world without spam.

ROBOKILLER'S IMPACT

RoboKiller remains committed to empowering everyone to create a world without spam calls and texts. In 2021, our community of spam-fighting users is on track to have our biggest year ever in our impact on the spam call problem at large.

135,000,000

Robocalls blocked in 2021 to date

50,000,000

Spam texts blocked in 2021 to date

250,000,000

Estimated robocalls blocked in 2021

80,000,000

Estimated spam texts blocked in 2021

\$110,000,000

Estimated prevented losses to robocall scams in 2021

\$8,500,000

Estimated prevented losses to text scams in 2021

930,000,000

Estimated minutes wasted by Answer Bots in 2021

HOW CAN AMERICANS PROTECT THEMSELVES?

[STIR/SHAKEN](#) is a great and welcomed first step in a more unified approach to fighting robocalls in 2021. However, a common misconception is that this technology will block unwanted calls. In reality, STIR/SHAKEN is a set of standards, agreed upon by various telecommunications industry stakeholders, that allows carriers to pass various attestation levels which help authenticate how reliable the caller ID information is for a given call. It is then up to each carrier to decide what to do, or not do, with that information. Combined with the fact that those authentication levels do not always correlate to whether a call is safe or not, STIR/SHAKEN is a useful signal for identifying potential spam, but only when used in conjunction with other analytics services and advanced technologies. STIR/SHAKEN will not solve the spam problem on its own.

So, while we expect this new technological framework to have a positive impact in reducing the total percentage of spam calls that employ caller ID spoofing tactics, it won't be enough to keep dangerous phone scams at bay for the average consumer.

With Americans on track to lose a combined \$716 million to robocalls and spam texts in 2021, consumers must take matters into their own hands to prevent phone scams from reaching them (and others) in the first place.

Here are a few ways consumers can protect themselves against dangerous phone scams:

- Register for the **Do Not Call List** to reduce the number of unwanted but legal telemarketing calls or texts you receive.
- Don't answer calls or texts **from numbers you don't know**; if you do answer, avoid pressing numbers or clicking links.
- Enlist a call and text blocker app like **RoboKiller** to prevent these calls/texts from reaching you in the first place.

MEET ROBOKILLER

RoboKiller

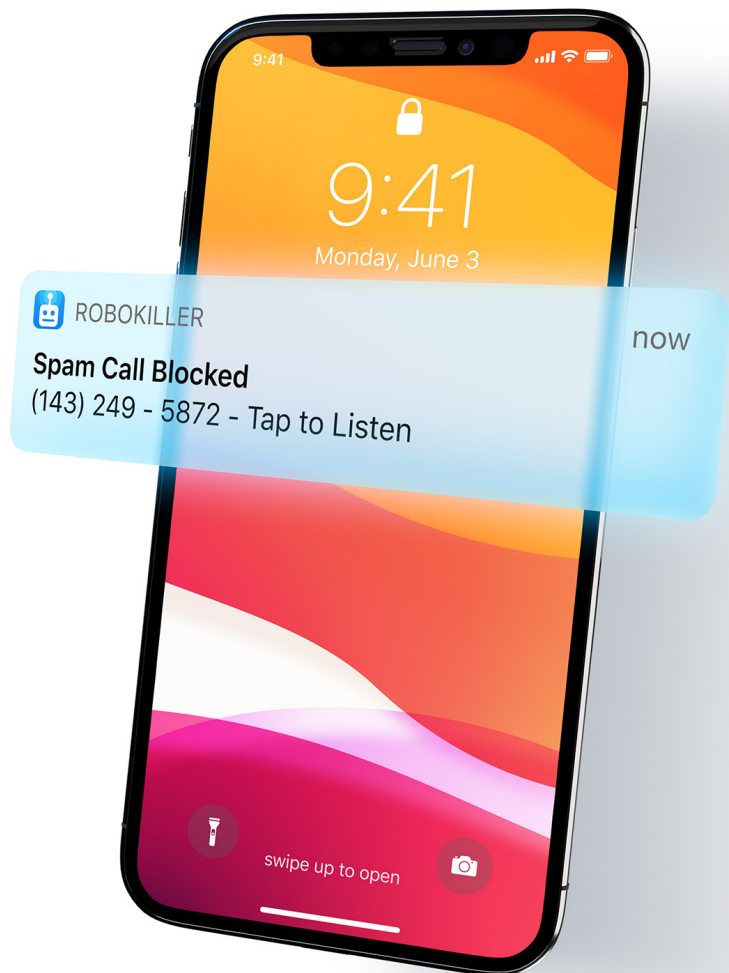
Let's create a world without spam.

RoboKiller gives you the power to fight back against spam calls and texts – and live life spam-call-free™

If you have a phone, you're a target for phone scams. But we think everyone should have the tools to fight back.

Take back control over your phone – and your life.

RoboKiller is your secret weapon to disarming the threats and distractions of unwanted calls and messages. Together, we can stall, screen, and stop unknown calls so that you can live life spam-call-free™.



**Live life spam-call-free™ with RoboKiller.
Try it risk-free for 7 days today!**

